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ABSTRACT

The Ohio School-to-Work (STW) Office was created in 1994 to manage state agencies' efforts to support 11 school-to-work pilot projects across Ohio. The STW Office shared its management responsibilities with the School-to-Work "A Team," which consisted of representatives from five Ohio departments and agencies, key business organizations, major labor unions, and community-based organizations. The STW Office created 12 regional alliances to coordinate education, economic, and workforce development in the regions. During its first year, the STW Office directly supported the creation of regional alliances and local partnerships. The STW Office's relationship to the state agencies involved in the A Team and the regional alliances and local partnerships were examined through interviews with five key stage agency representatives, three regional coordinators, and six local partnership coordinators. All the state agency representatives expressed varying degrees of concern regarding their agencies' role in STW. The responses to questions about regional-state and local-state relationships varied by geographic region. The interviews resulted in 16 recommendations for improving the STW Office's relationship to the state agencies and regional and local partnerships involved in STW. (Appended are the interview questions for state agency representatives and interview guides for regional coordinators and local partnership coordinators.) (MN)

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Implementation of Ohio's School-to-Work System

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Prepared by Metis Associates for the Ohio School-to-Work Office

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IMPLEMENTATION OF OHIO'S SCHOOL-TO-WORK SYSTEM

Background

With the support of the Ohio Legislature, the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Development, the Ohio School-to-Work Office was created in 1994 to manage the efforts of these agencies to provide approximately $780,000 to support 11, two-year local school-to-work pilot projects across the state. At about the same time, the state received a $450,000 federal School-to-Work planning grant which further supported Ohio's efforts to develop a school-to-work system.

During this period, the School-to-Work Office was housed in the Bureau of Employment Services and functioned as the central coordination point for efforts to better prepare youth for successful entry into the world of work. Planning for School-to-Work development and implementation was carried out by the "A" Team was assembled. With the awarding of the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act Grant of approximately $10,000,000, the School-to-Work Office became an independent entity that reported to the Lt. Governor and the GHRIC which had primary oversight for the state's STW system (The GHRIC has now become the Governor's Workforce Development Board). The School-to-Work Office shared its management responsibilities with the School-to-Work "A" Team which consisted of representatives from the Department of Education, the Board of Regents, the Department of Development, the Bureau of Employment Services, the Department of Human Services, key business organizations (i.e., Ohio Business Roundtable, Ohio Manufacturers' Association and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce), major labor unions and community-based organizations, such as the Urban League.

As an organizing structure to implement a school-to-work system in the state of Ohio, the STW Office created 12 Regional Alliances to coordinate education, economic and workforce development efforts in these regions. In its first year of implementation grant funding, the STW Office directly supported both the creation of Regional Alliances and Local Partnerships. Through the leadership of Regional Coordinators, who were created to serve as liaisons between the STW Office and Local Partnerships, clearinghouses for STW information, facilitators of the development of regional plans, identifiers of the technical assistance needs of Local Partnerships, and coordinators with the reform efforts of other agencies, more responsibility has been given to the regional level for the allocation and oversight of funding provided to the Local Partnerships.

This report is divided into two sections. The first section examines the relationship of the STW Office to the state agencies which were originally part of the "A" Team. The head of the agency or key staff members of the agency were interviewed to elicit their perceptions of the process of implementing the STW system in Ohio and the involvement of their agency in that process. The second section of the report deals with the relationship of the STW Office to the Regional Alliances and the Local Partnerships. Individuals were interviewed at both the regional and local levels to gather their perceptions of the various roles in implementing the STW system. Recommendations for both sections of the report are found on page 16.

Section 1: The Involvement of State Agencies in School-to-Work

Introduction

A number of state agencies in Ohio are engaged in the areas of education, training and workforce development. These agencies include the Department of Education, the Bureau of Employment Services, the Board of Regents, the Department of Development, and the Department of Human Services. These agencies were involved from the beginning in the design and development of School-to-Work system, principally through a public-private design group called the "A Team." The "A" Team, with state agency representatives playing an active role, developed Ohio's application for its Development Grant and State Implementation Grant under the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

At some point in the implementation process, the School-to-Work "A" Team was disbanded. Currently relationships between the School-to-Work Office and state agencies are carried out through staff who are on loan to the School-to-Work Office from the state agencies, and through meetings held to plan and review joint initiatives.

The information below describes how representatives of these state agencies view their role in the implementation of Ohio's STW system.

Methodology

Individual interviews were conducted with the following representatives of key state agencies which had a role in the implementation of School-to-Work in Ohio (See the appendices for the interview questions used with state agency representatives):

- Deborah Bowland, Administrator, Ohio Bureau of Employment Services
- Gene Harris, Chief Program Officer, Joanna Kister, Director, Division of Vocational and Adult Education, and Vicki Melvin, Associate Director, Division of Vocational and Adult Education, Ohio Department of Education
- Linda O'Connor, Manager, Ohio Industrial Development Program, Ohio Department of Development
- Jonathan Tafel, Director, Academic Initiatives and Educational Linkages, Elaine Edgar, Administrator, Tech Prep, and Michael Taggert, Ohio Board of Regents
- Arnold R. Tompkins, Director, Ohio Department of Human Services

This section of the report summarizes the information and perceptions provided by those individuals who were interviewed. Where there is universal or general agreement on a given point of view, it is so indicated. Where a single individual expressed a point of view or several

individuals shared a point of view, that is also indicated. At the end of this section, findings are provided.

Role of the State Agencies in School-to-Work Implementation

All of the state agency representatives indicated various degrees of concern with the current role their agencies are playing in School-to-Work implementation. Nearly all of those interviewed described the work of the interagency team, that functioned at an earlier stage of development of the School-to-Work initiative, as an effective vehicle for interagency planning and communication. They commented that the staff members who served on the interagency team were able to establish policy, make things happen, and keep the focus on results and big issues because they served at a highly responsible level within their own agencies and were able to link their agencies' initiatives with the STW effort.

Several of those interviewed described the process by which the interagency team was disbanded and the "loaned executive" approach was put in its place. They expressed concern with the loaned executive approach because the staff loaned were not at a high enough level in the agency to set policy and make decisions, and because the staff that were loaned became disconnected with the initiatives within their agencies. This disconnection of staff from their agencies has occurred even though several of those interviewed said they meet on a weekly basis with those staff members who had been loaned to the STW Office.

The state agency representatives identified a number of initiatives and programs for which they are responsible that have a natural connection with School-to-Work. Those initiatives and programs included:

- Vocational Education and Career Education
- TechPrep Education
- Industrial Training
- Apprenticeship
- Family and Children First

The state representatives felt that these initiatives and programs, however, could be more strongly connected with the efforts of the STW Office.

Several of the state agency staff indicated that at the regional level there is a duplication of effort because several advisory or governing groups operate in the same regions. Examples of this duplication include:

- The Industrial Training Program's regional advisory councils
- One-Stop Career Center advisory councils
- Family and Children First Councils
- Private Industry Councils
- TechPrep Consortia

In general the state agency representatives expressed concern with the disconnection of School-to-Work from their agencies' initiatives and programs. They indicated that as a result of this disconnection, a number opportunities to connect School-to-Work with other ongoing initiatives are missed. They also indicated that this disconnection will make it difficult to sustain and institutionalize School-to-Work efforts once federal School-to-Work funding is no longer available to the state.

At the same time that the state agency representatives described their disconnection from the School-to-Work Office, they described a number of initiatives and programs in the area of workforce development in which two or more agencies work on a collaborative basis.

The solution recommended by nearly all of the state agency representatives is for the Governor to re-establish an interagency team composed of representatives of the key state agencies involved in education, training, workforce development and human services. This interagency team could work with the School-to-Work office to connect School-to-Work with related initiatives and programs in ways that would both enhance and extend the effectiveness of School-to-Work and related initiatives and programs.

Individuals in State Agencies with Responsibility for School-to-Work

Several of the state agency representatives were able to identify individuals within their agencies who are responsible for School-to-Work. Several others said that the individuals they sent as loaned executives served this function, and that they no longer had individuals within their agencies responsible for School-to-Work. Several of the agencies described difficulties in managing the initiatives and programs for which they are directly responsible, given reductions and limitations in state agency staffing levels. The Department of Education described the strongest level of involvement in School-to-Work. Because of the key role of schools in School-to-Work, the Department of Education strives to maintain regular contact with the School-to-Work Office. The Department of Education indicated that, in spite of sustained efforts to maintain communication and joint planning with the School-to-Work Office, it would like to see greater communication and joint planning.

The Extent and Nature of Cross-Agency and Interagency Work in School-to-Work

The state agency representatives described a wide range of interagency efforts related to workforce development and School-to-Work. These interagency efforts included the following:

- The Department of Education and the Board of Regents have worked jointly with the Deans of Education to form a coalition to support four initiatives: 1) frameworks for preservice education; 2) professional development academies for practitioners; 3) clearinghouses for math, science and other academic disciplines; and 4) encouraging professional development organizations for teachers, administrators and others to incorporate School-to-Work in their agendas.

- The Board of Regents, the Department of Education work together to implement Ohio's Tech Prep program.

- The Department of Education and the Onio Bureau of Employment Services work on an ongoing basis to link vocational education and programs supported under the Job Training Program Act.

- The Department of Education and the STW Office serve on the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services One-Stop Career Center Committee to ensure a connection between Vocational Education and the One-Stop Career Centers.

- The Department of Development has an interagency agreement with the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services for joint efforts in support of the establishment and operation of Ohio's One-Stop Career Centers.

- The Department of Human Services, the Department of Development and the Department of Education work jointly in support of welfare reform.

- The Department of Development has worked jointly with the Board of Regents and the Department of Education on issues dealing with Vocational Education, Tech Prep and the general track.

- The Board of Regents and the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services work jointly to connect employment services and two-year colleges which offer training programs for business and industry.

The general sense of the state agency representatives is that there are a number of very effective interagency efforts in support of education, training, workforce development and human services, and that the School-to-Work initiative is not yet well connected to these existing interagency efforts.

State Agencies' View of the Greatest Accomplishments in School-to-Work Implementation

When asked to identify the greatest accomplishment to date in implementing School-to-Work in Ohio, most of the state agency representatives commented on the effort expended to date to establish a functioning state office with a regional network. The following accomplishments were cited:

- The development of Local Partnerships and the support for local variations by locally developed coalitions.

- Providing a large number of work-based learning opportunities to Ohio's students.

- Stimulating vocational education to modernize and adapt to emerging career fields.

- Positive connections between schools, colleges and businesses at the local level, stimulated by federal School-to-Work funding.

- Setting up an infrastructure at the regional level through the Regional Alliances and Regional Coordinators, which has great potential for stimulating joint efforts at the regional level. It was noted that the formation of the Regional Alliances was accomplished through the effort and financial support provided by the Department of Development.

- The inclusion of School-to-Work in the Department of Education's strategic plan for education.

- The administration of the Work Keys assessment to approximately 20,000 high school seniors, through the joint effort of the Department of Education, the School-to-Work Office and the Ohio Business Roundtable.

Most of those interviewed stated that they believed that the most significant accomplishments were occurring at the local and regional levels.

State Agencies' View of the Greatest Challenges to School-to-Work Implementation

A wide range of challenges were identified, including the following:

- Ensuring the large scale involvement of employers to ensure that a high level of work-based learning opportunities are available to students. Child labor laws and liability/insurance concerns may work against such a large scale involvement of employers.

- Sustainability of the School-to-Work effort, given the time it takes to executive a plan and generate results.

- Changing actual classroom practices and the ways schools are organized and operate.

- The tendency to view and treat School-to-Work as just another program and initiative, which can be particularly confusing to employers, given the large number of initiatives in which they are asked to be involved.

- Connecting and integrating School-to-Work resources and efforts with other related state initiatives and programs.

- Developing an effective and sustained marketing plan that reaches out to both employers and parents.

- Creating a School-to-Work vision that is more than something organized around a federal grant, so that the effort continues after the federal funding is ended.

- Serving all students, especially those special populations with barriers to employment, who tend to be underserved.

- Setting clear, measurable goals and then being accountable for measuring success.

State Agencies' View of the Marketing of School-to-Work

The general sense of the state agency representatives is that School-to-Work needs to be marketed more effectively. Groups that were identified as being in need of considerably more information were businesses, educators and parents. Several of those interviewed acknowledged the value of the initial kick-off conference that drew a good deal of attention and coverage, but felt that there has not yet been a sustained marketing effort to build upon that initial attention and coverage.

Findings

The following findings are given based on the interviews of individuals representing key state agencies:

1. There was nearly universal agreement that there needs to be more involvement of state agencies in School-to-Work implementation.

2. There was nearly universal agreement that there needs to be a more effective mechanism for the involvement of state agencies in School-to-Work implementation needs to be put in place.

3. There was nearly universal agreement that there needs to be a much stronger connection of School-to-Work with other related education and workforce development initiatives underway.

4. There was nearly universal agreement that the loaned executive approach to state agency involvement in School-to-Work implementation diminished the direct involvement of the state agencies.

5. There was a universal commitment of the state agency representatives to the value and importance of School-to-Work.

6. There was concern expressed by a number of state agency representative over whether School-to-Work will be able to be fully implemented so that it reaches all of Ohio's students.

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7. There was a clear acknowledgment by the state agency representatives of the level of commitment and effort on the part of the School-to-Work Office, Regional Alliances and Local Partnerships, and of a number of successful implementation efforts at the local level across the state.

Section 2: The School-to-Work Office, the Regional Alliances and the Local Partnerships

Introduction

Twelve Regional Alliances, consistent with the boundaries of Ohio's Economic Development Regions, were formed and met in the early months of 1996 to develop School-to-Work One Year Commitment Plans. In varying degrees of detail, the Commitment Plans describe the process by which the Regional Alliances were formed, the involvement of stakeholder groups and formation of an executive committee, the process of developing the strategic plan, the objectives and implementation strategies, and the budget allocations.

Since 1996, the STW Office has held regular monthly meetings with the Regional Coordinators of the Regional Alliances and has met regularly with the Chairs of the Regional Alliances. In the summer of 1997, a team retreat was held with the staff of the STW Office and the Regional Coordinators. That same summer, the STW Office convened an Institute for the Regional Coordinators and the Executive Committees of the Regional Alliances to support their planning efforts for continuation funding. Greater responsibility for oversight and funding of the Local Partnerships have been given to the Regional Coordinators who, with the STW Office staff, are viewed as part of the STW Team.

The information below describes how the Regional Coordinators and Local Partnership contact persons view their role in the implementation of Ohio's STW system.

Methodology

Information related to the Regional Alliances and Regional Coordinators, and Local Partnerships, was obtained from a review of the Regional Alliances' One Year Commitment Plans, and individual interviews with three Regional Coordinators and with representatives of Local Partnerships in two of these regions. At Metis' request, the three regions were selected by the State School-to-Work Office. Metis also asked each Coordinator in these three regions to identify three Local Partnerships with diverse experiences. These included partnerships composed of single school districts, several school districts in a designated area, vocational districts with their constituent school districts and feeder schools, and multi-county collaborations. Two Regional Coordinators provided the requested information. The interviews were conducted from July through September, 1997. Please see the Appendices for the interview questions.

Regional Level

Metis Associates reviewed and analyzed the first year School-to-Work Commitment Plans developed by the Regional Alliances. These plans reflect the status of School-to-Work in the regions as of the summer of 1996. At the time of the interviews, Regional Alliances were in the process of developing new plans. In order to learn more about regional structures, roles and relationships within the region, and the strategies being undertaken by the Regional Alliances, Metis staff conducted individual interviews with three Regional Coordinators.

Each Regional Alliance encompasses multiple counties, which range in number from three to ten. Initial meetings of the Regional Alliances brought together stakeholders from the following stakeholder groups: education (including higher education), business, community organizations, labor, government, parents, and students. These initial meetings tended to be large; Regional Alliances that included this information in their Plan reported attendance of 60 to more than 250 stakeholders. Each region formed an executive committee which would be responsible for the development of a plan for School-to-Work implementation at the regional level.

The number of members serving on executive committees ranged from 17 to 34, with an average membership of 22. They included representation from all stakeholder groups. Across all the regions, on average, there were 4-5 representatives from school systems (including vocational education) and business/industry, 2-3 each from community organizations/social services and labor, and 1-2 from higher education, parents, government, and students. Few of the plans indicated the designation of a chairperson of the executive committee, although this may have occurred.

All of the regions reported some form of subcommittee structure to address various administrative and programmatic functions such as oversight of implementation, finance, personnel, membership, professional development, etc. Each region designated a fiscal agent. These included vocational education districts/centers (four regions), Private Industry Councils (two), an institution of higher education, county board of education, local school district, county community action commission, and education and business partnerships (one each).

The Commitment Plans present vision statements for the regions and first year objectives, along with statements of strategies, action steps, performance indicators, and evaluation mechanisms. The first year plans may be characterized as describing the beginnings of the development of regional structures and systems. Objectives fall within the categories of work-based learning/opportunities, curriculum and instruction, professional development, stakeholder involvement, participation of all, communications and outreach, and student performance/ development of standards. Frequently, the strategies outlined for each objective involve identification of resources (human) and practices, development of committees and plans, and dissemination of information.

Under the objective of work-based learning/opportunities, Regional Alliances have included such strategies as identifying business partners and encouraging their involvement, working with business/industry to develop agreements for training or for awarding educational credits, and identifying and addressing barriers to employer participation. Examples of strategies identified under curriculum and instruction include identifying resources, identifying core competencies and best practices, and disseminating information. Professional development strategies include developing more specific plans as well as providing and funding training opportunities. Regional Alliances proposed to promote stakeholder involvement by identifying and recruiting members, establishing criteria and structures for participation, and developing and implementing marketing plans. It is noteworthy that the objective, "participation of all," among those regions that included it, was interpreted as the participation of all stakeholder groups rather than the participation of all students in School-to-Work activities.

A few of the plans include a description of the following responsibilities of the Regional Coordinator:

- Serving as liaison between the Regional Alliance and Local Partnerships
- Serving as a clearinghouse for School-to-Work information
- Facilitating the development and implementation of regional plans
- Brokering and balancing the interests of all regional stakeholders
- Staffing the executive committee, identifying stakeholders and convening regional meetings
- Assisting in the formation of local/county partnerships in the region
- Assisting with the development of local/county alliance commitment plans and reviewing Local Partnership proposals
- Working with Local Partnerships to ensure that shared services are utilized wherever possible
- Gathering data, analyzing needs, and identifying gaps in a comprehensive STW system
- Identifying existing STW activities, coordinating workforce development programs, and leveraging resources
- Facilitating the development of a comprehensive staff development plan
- Providing technical assistance
- Coordinating media relations, marketing, and general outreach

Roles and Relationships within the Regions

The Regional Coordinators interviewed by Metis described a variety of roles for the Regional Alliance. They included acting as a champion of STW across the region, playing a foundational role by leading change across the system, acting as a leader and catalyst for member counties and individual partnerships, assembling the pieces of a STW network, identifying STW models and developing pilots, encouraging people to engage in STW project activities, and investing in venture capital and laying the groundwork for continued funding of STW. In contrast, they saw the Local Partnerships as the frontline for School-to-Work, functioning as the

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experts, developing models, being sensitive to the community, and being innovative as they go about the process of implementation.

Local projects and partnerships received STW funding prior to the establishment of STW regions and Regional Alliances. Within each region are projects/partnerships that received federal or state funding in the past but no longer receive funding, as well as those with current funding. The web of existing relationships in a region includes partnerships formed within a single school, between schools (including parochial schools), within a school district, within vocational school regions, across districts, within a single county, and across counties. Some partnerships overlap with others, some cross over into other regions. Because of the overlap, the number of these partnerships is difficult to quantify precisely.

Regional Coordinators in two of the regions reported the creation of county or subregional teams in order to link their Local Partnerships into a smaller and more effective geographic area, and to promote subregional STW strategies. On a practical level, consolidation was seen as a way of coordinating contacts with area businesses and industry, and eliminating any duplication of efforts. It was also seen as a way of promoting the sharing of resources between larger and smaller, or urban and suburban, school districts. These Coordinators expected the number of separate Local Partnerships to be reduced in future years. However, one Coordinator expected the number of Local Partnerships to grow and that new partnerships would be incorporated into the present regional structure.

Regional Alliances/Coordinators have convened meetings of their Local Partnerships and some representatives of Local Partnerships serve on Regional Alliance Executive or other committees. Regional Coordinators saw the role of the Regional Alliance in relation to Local Partnerships as involving funding (through the distribution of block grant funds), formalizing partnerships, building relationships, building an alignment of partnerships to address STW issues, undertaking joint professional development, convening regional focus groups, marketing STW, acting as a conduit of information, and providing technical assistance. Some also mentioned an oversight or assessment role, however the acceptance of this responsibility was not unanimous and, in one case, this role was specifically rejected.

Regional Relationship with the Ohio School-to-Work Office

Responses related to questions about the regional-state relationship differed from region to region. Regional Coordinators positively noted the State Office's new direction of providing block grant funding to the regions to develop partnerships and build systems, its role in investing in a state infrastructure, the establishment of working relationships with Regional Coordinators, and the establishment of new relationships with executive chairs of the Regional Alliances.

In contrast to these positive perceptions, relationships between Regional Coordinators and State STW Office staff assigned as liaisons to the regions ranged from supportive to non-existent.

When asked how the relationship with the State Office could be improved, Regional Coordinators recommended that the State STW Office should:

- Arrange for longer term outplacement of state agency staff to the STW Office so that a commitment to STW may be built and so that longer range planning can be accomplished
- Improve the effectiveness of State Office liaisons
- Respect the Regional Alliance members who are volunteers and who have multiple demands on their time
- Allocate a longer time period for proposal development in response to Requests for Proposals
- Shift the accountability of Regional Coordinators from joint state/region authority to the regional level alone
- Create information storage/retrieval systems within the STW Office so that information is requested only once
- Provide information about new developments and tools such as Work Keys

Strategies

Changes in regional goals and strategies since the development of the first year Commitment Plans ranged from minimal, with some shifts in budget allocations and greater specificity in governance structure, to complete revision of the goals, strategies, and composition of the executive committee. In one region, goals have been refashioned and grouped in four areas: community partnerships, school-based learning, public awareness, and public policy.

In general, the barriers that the regions encountered to implementing their strategies related to issues of turf, lack of support for STW from non-vocational educators, and opposition to STW from some groups or individuals. Since Regional Coordinators had only been working for about one year, their efforts were seen to be at a beginning stage of development.

The following strategies, presented according to the categories of objectives stated in the One Year Commitment Plans, but drawn from information obtained in the interviews as well, were identified:

Stakeholder Involvement. Strategies utilized by the Regional Coordinators/Alliances included:

- Creation of county teams
- Creation and dissemination of newsletters including a specific publication targeted to parents
- Development of directories
- Working to foster the development of Local Partnerships where none exist
- Mini-grant awards to Local Partnerships

- Small group and one-on-one meetings
- Strategic planning retreat for executive committee members, which included task-oriented team development and participation in "ropes" course activities
- Development of a governance structure including by-laws, work toward incorporation, directors/officers insurance, and job descriptions for committee members
- Public recognition

Curriculum and Instruction. Regions utilized several different strategies to promote curriculum and instructional changes in support of STW. One barrier identified was a lack of focus in this area.

- Encouraging county teams to apply for funding (mini-grants) for development of curriculum and instruction related to STW
- Focus on the classroom level
- Identification and exploration of models for testing and/or replication (e.g., High Schools That Work, TechPrep)
- Development of notebooks, databases, and information files
- Administration of college entrance tests to high school students for the purpose of analyzing test results against high school course enrollment; information shared with teachers, students and parents
- "World of Work" summer camps for graduating 8th graders, their parents, teachers, and counselors

Professional Development. Strategies in this area included:

- Viewing professional development as a vehicle for systemic change
- Leadership forum for superintendents, presenting STW as a vehicle for systemic change
- Sharing of best practices in the region
- Teacher externships
- Sponsoring teachers to attend a graduate course on STW
- Train the trainer courses
- Purchase of career development videotapes/materials for every school district in the region resulting in volume discount and free in-service training

Work-based Learning. Efforts in this area were just beginning through mini-grants and state funding, outreach and presentations to employers. The need to obtain resources, including in-kind contributions, from the business community was recognized.

Participation of All. Although mission statements reflect this goal, there was little mention of work toward ensuring that STW reaches all students. As already noted in relation to the One Year Commitment Plans, this goal generally was interpreted to mean the involvement of all stakeholders, rather than all students, in School-to-Work. However, one region pointed to the

creation of an academy targeted to at-risk students by one school district, and noted the region's interest in replicating the model in other districts.

Communication and Outreach. The Regional Alliances relied on in-kind contributions for some of their communication and outreach activities. Strategies included:

- Newsletters, including a newsletter for parents and a regional newsletter that is distributed to every school building in the region
- Regional meetings
- Public awareness campaign that includes focus groups of parents and students on how students choose a career and a commitment from a newspaper to print a special supplement on workforce development including the results of the focus groups; additional copies are printed for distribution to schools, teachers, and guidance counselors

Local Level

The diversity of scope and structure of the Local Partnerships interviewed by Metis creates difficulty in making general observations. They represent a variety of geographic areas, sizes, and structures. The following are general observations from these interviews:

- Representatives of these Local Partnerships participate in regional and subregional (where these exist) committees and subcommittees, but are not closely connected to other Local Partnerships within their region.

- The Local Partnership representatives view their Regional Coordinator as very supportive and as providing technical assistance in identifying needs and with strategic planning; providing leadership, information and acting as a resource; reviewing grant applications; coordinating business contacts; making connections between people, and providing funding. One representative, however, expressed a lack of clarity about the role of the Regional Coordinator and Regional Alliances and suggested that the Regional Coordinator disseminate a regular regional newsletter and minutes of Alliance meetings.

- Strategies for stakeholder involvement at the Local Partnership level include evening community forums for middle school and high school parents, students and teachers with presentations by the different stakeholder groups involved in STW; and the use of subgrants as an incentive for participation. Barriers include turnover in top school administrators, school district tax levy failures, the amount of time required to develop and maintain contacts with businesses, difficulty identifying key personnel in other school systems that are part of multi-system partnerships, and attitudes opposed to School-to-Work.

- Strategies for STW curriculum and instruction include curriculum realignment using the state curriculum frameworks, the formation of school-based teams or a task force of school district curriculum directors, the development of career pathways, and the implementation of specific curriculum for designated grades. Barriers identified include the belief, on the part of some, that STW only includes vocational education, and the fear that STW will absorb funding now allocated to career development.

- Professional development strategies include teacher externships of varying lengths to accommodate different needs and schedules and use of grant funds for materials development and workshops. Resistance from teachers is sometimes an obstacle, as is the ability to obtain permission for teachers to be out of the classroom to attend professional development.

- Work-based learning strategies include the development of mentorships and training agreements with businesses. The ability to coordinate business involvement and avoid duplicating outreach was noted as a challenge.

- Communication and outreach strategies noted were agreements with local newspapers and Chambers of Commerce to print articles about STW; distribution of minutes of meetings; dissemination of specially-prepared materials about STW to parents, students, and teachers; and maintenance of an Internet web site.

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Recommendations

Recommendations for Section 1- The Involvement of State Agencies in School-to-Work

1. To promote joint strategic planning top link School-to-Work implementation with other related initiatives and programs, an interagency team comprised of high level representatives from the Department of Education, the Board of Regents, the Bureau of Employment Services, The Department of Development and the Department of Human Services should be established to work with the School-to-Work Office on an ongoing basis.

2. The interagency team, if it is established, should be charged with determining ways to integrate School-to-Work with other key state-supported initiatives and programs, as a means to ensure that School-to-Work efforts are sustained and institutionalized when federal School-to-Work funding is no longer available.

3. The interagency team, if it is established, should also be charged with examining how the various governing and advisory groups at the regional level relate to each other and with taking steps to promote more coordinated, less duplicative efforts at the regional level.

4. Strong efforts need to be expended to clearly link School-to-Work with the Department of Education's education reform and vocational education School-to-Work efforts, and with the Board of Regents' TechPrep efforts, as key vehicles to ensure that School-to-Work is fully and effectively implemented in schools across the state.

Recommendations for Section 2- The School-to-Work Office, the Regional Alliances and the Local Partnerships

5. The State School-to-Work Committee should set broad policies and priorities. The State STW Office should support these policies and translate them into guidelines for the regions.

6. To strengthen the relationship of the State STW Office with the Regional Coordinators and the Regional Alliances, the role of the regional liaisons needs to be clarified. Regional liaisons need to be permanent members of the STW office staff, be informed about regional efforts and committed to long-range planning for the STW initiative at the regional and local levels.

7. The STW State Office should continue to be sensitive to the significant differences that exist throughout the State. There are considerable differences in the economies, geography, density of population, demographics and interests of the State's regions. As the State STW Office further develops its working relationships with Regional Coordinators and with other contacts at the regional level, and signals its expectations,

these regional differences must be taken into account. The State STW Office should consider the convening of subgroups of regions in addition to its statewide meetings. These subgroupings could consist of geographically contiguous regions or regions with similar interests or characteristics and bring together Regional Coordinators, Alliance executive committee members, and Local Partnership representatives.

8. The roles and responsibilities of staff in the State STW Office and the Regional Coordinators should be clearly developed and defined so that they are in balance and complement rather than overlap and conflict with each other. Lack of agreement about state/regional roles can create tension. Some of the confusion may be attributed to the arrangement in which Regional Coordinators are considered part of the State Office team and are paid by the State but are hired by the Regional Alliances. Clearly, Ohio has a tradition of local autonomy and responsibility, but the development of a statewide School-to-Work system perhaps necessitates a shared and coordinated effort between the regions and the state.

9. The State STW Office should have responsibility for the development and maintenance of an information and data system that supports School-to-Work efforts.

10. The State STW Office should foster regional efforts to sustain School-to-Work after federal funding ceases. Regional Alliances already are beginning to think about how they will be able to continue their efforts. They are developing by-laws, planning to incorporate, and exploring long-term funding. Technical assistance from the State STW Office could further regional efforts.

11. The State STW Office should develop guidelines for entities to qualify as STW Local Partnerships. Because of the history of School-to-Work in Ohio, local STW partnerships in the State are composed of a variety of efforts that involve "projects" in individual schools, vocational schools, and single school districts, as well as larger collaborations within and across school districts and counties. Because of the funding history, in some cases, Regional Coordinators are unsure of the exact number of Local Partnerships in their regions. The guidelines established in the School to Work Opportunities Act should be followed by the regions and the Local Partnerships. Furthermore, the geographic areas of Local Partnerships should not overlap. The experience in other states shows that it is unusual for the geographic boundaries of Local Partnerships to cross each other. One of the other implementation states that did have overlapping boundaries took action to eliminate this.

12. The State STW Office should consider options, in the next funding cycle, for consolidating and integrating smaller Local Partnerships. Block grant funding from the State STW Office to the regions should be utilized for system building rather than separate, fragmented projects. Consolidation would eliminate fragmentation and support the development of broader School-to-Work systems. In areas in which school districts have

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not worked together previously, these larger collaborations may need technical assistance and support .

13. The Regional Coordinators should bring together Local Partnership representatives for the purpose of sharing information and knowledge where this does not already occur.

14. Regional Coordinators/Alliances and Local Partnerships should work to balance the interests of Vocational Education with academic education. There should be stronger overtures to academic institutions and educators in order to promote their full involvement. The strength of Vocational Education in Ohio is well-known and respected. To accomplish its broad mission, however, School-to-Work must encompass both education sectors.

15. The State Office should respect the time and other pressures under which Regional Alliance members work and that many committee members volunteer their time, and build this reality into their deadlines.

16. The State STW Office's goal area, "Participation of All," should be clearly defined and conveyed to regional and local level representatives. As defined in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, this provision relates to the availability of School-to-Work opportunities and activities to all students. However, according to the regions' first year Commitment Plans, this term seems to have been interpreted to mean the participation of all stakeholder groups. Since limited information on student participation was available on federal STW reports, attention to this area is needed.

Appendices

- **Interview Questions for State Agency Representatives**
- **Interview Guide: Regional Coordinators**
- **Interview Guide: Local Partnership Coordinators**

Ohio School-to-Work Interview Questions
State Agency Representatives

Person Interviewed_____
Agency/Organization_____
Person Conducting the Interview_____
Date of the Interview

1. What role are is your agency playing in the implementation of School-to-Work in Ohio? Are you satisfie with this role? Would you like it to be expanded? reduced?

2. Who in your agency has responsibility for working on the School-to-Work initiative?

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3. Is your agency working with any other agencies on the School-to-Work initiative? What is the nature of that work?

4. What do you think is the greatest accomplishment thus far in implementing School-to-Work in Ohio?

5. What do you see as the greatest challenge to implementing School-to-Work in Ohio?

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6. Do you think that there is a general understanding/acceptance of School-to-Work by K-12 educators? postsecondary educators? Bureau of Employment Services? Department of Development? Department Education? Board of Regents? Department of Human Services? the employer community? parents? students?

7. Has the School-to-Work effort in Ohio been marketed well? What else might be done in this area?

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Interview Guide: Regional Coordinators
STW Implementation Strategies
Ohio School-to-Work Evaluation

Regional and Local Roles and Relationships

We would like to have a better understanding of the roles of Regional Alliances and Local Partnerships and the relationship between them.

1. What do you think is the role of Regional Alliances in the implementation of School-To-Work in the State?

2. What do you think is the role of Local Partnerships in the implementation of STW in the State?

3. How many Local Partnerships are there in this region? Do you expect this number to grow? By how many?

4. What geographic areas do your Local Partnerships cover? How many are single or multi-county, single or multi-school district, or other administrative unit?

5. How would you describe the nature of the relationship between Regional Alliances and Local Partnerships around the State? (PROBE: reporting and monitoring, funding, technical assistance, coordination and information sharing, other)

6. How would you describe the relationship between your Regional Alliance and the Local Partnerships within your region, and your roles? Is it the same as in the rest of the State, or different?

7. Does your Regional Alliance convene meetings of all Local Partnerships in the region? For what purpose? How often?

8. Do members of the Local Partnerships in your region serve on your Executive Committee or on other Committees?

Goals, Strategies, Barriers and Successes

9. The first year commitment plan for your region listed a series of goals. Have these goals changed since you began? In what way?

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10. For each of the following goals, what strategies are being utilized? What barriers have you encountered and how has the region tried to overcome them? What strategies have been successful?

Goal	Strategies	Barriers and Methods to Overcome Them	Successes	% of Budget
a. Stakeholder Involvement				
b. Curriculum and Instruction (PROBE: selection and development of career majors, development of new curricula based on skill standards, integration of academic, occupational and work-based curriculum)				
c. Professional Development				
d. Work-based Learning				

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Goal	Strategies	Barriers and Methods to Overcome Them	Successes	% of Budget
e. Participation of All				
f. Student Performance				
g. Communication and Outreach (Marketing)				
h. Other				

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11. (IF NOT MENTIONED ABOVE) Is your region working on the development of career guidance and information services?

(IF YES) Can you describe your strategies and activities in this area? What barriers have you encountered and how has the region tried to overcome them? What strategies have been successful?

12. How does your region expect to utilize the STW Benchmarks and Performance Indicators currently being developed for the State?

13. Has your region developed, or is it developing, its own benchmarks or performance indicators to evaluate institutional, teacher, or employer participation in School-To-Work? (IF YES) What are they?

14. Are there other areas of success that you can point to so far? What are they?

15. Are there other barriers to implementation that you have not yet mentioned? What are they? How is your Regional Alliance working to overcome them?

16. Does your region have a five year plan? (IF YES) Request copy.
(IF NO) Are you developing a five year plan?
(IF YES) Where are you in that process?

Budget and Resource Allocation

17. What is the current budget (state funds) for your Regional Alliance and how are these funds allocated among your various goals (as listed in Q. 10)? How are these allocations determined?
Budget: % allocation by goal area:

18. To what extent are these funds matched by other sources? Can you please provide a breakdown of matching funds by source for each goal area?

19. Are there goal or work areas that are underfunded? Which ones? What plans does your region have to solicit additional funding?

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20. How are information and resources allocated to institutions/agencies to promote ownership of School-To-Work and to encourage them to redirect their resources to STW?

21. How is information shared among local workforce development organizations?

Relationship with the Ohio School-To-Work Office

22. What is the nature of the relationship between the Regional Alliances and the Ohio School-To-Work Office? (PROBE: reporting, funding, technical assistance, coordination and information sharing, other)

23. How could this relationship be improved?

24. Are there areas in which your Regional Alliance could use additional assistance, either from the State School-To-Work Office or from other state agencies? What are they?

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Interview Guide: Local Partnership Coordinators
STW Implementation Strategies
Ohio School-to-Work Evaluation

Governance and Administrative Structure of Local Partnerships

We would like to have a better understanding of the governance and administrative structure of your Local Partnership as well as learn about its origins and history.

1. Can you describe when and how your Local Partnership was formed?

2. What geographic area (e.g., single or multi-county, single or multi-school district) do you cover?

3. How is it governed and administered? (PROBE: committee and chair structure, stakeholder membership and involvement, frequency of meetings, staffing, fiscal agent)

Local and Regional Roles and Relationship

We also would like to have a better understanding of the role of your Local Partnership and your Regional Alliance and the relationship between the two.

4. What would you say is the role of Local Partnerships in the implementation of School-To-Work?

5. What is the role of Regional Alliances in the implementation of School-To-Work?

6. What is the nature of the relationship between your Local Partnership and your Regional Alliance? (PROBE: reporting and monitoring, funding, technical assistance, coordination and information sharing, other)

7. Do members of your Local Partnership serve on your Regional Alliance's Executive Committee or on other Committees? In what capacity?

8. Do members of your Regional Alliance serve on your Partnership's committees? Which committees? In what capacity?

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9. Does your Regional Alliance convene meetings of all Local Partnerships in your region? For what purpose? How often?

10. What is the relationship between the Local Partnerships in this region? Do the coordinators or other representatives meet together regularly? Who meets, how often do they meet, and for what purpose?

11. Are there ways that your Local Partnership could benefit from assistance from your Regional Alliance? What are they?

Knowledge and Perceptions of Other Local Partnerships

12. How familiar are you with other Local Partnerships in your region? How typical is the structure and operation of your Local Partnership compared to other Local Partnerships in the region?

13. How familiar are you with Local Partnerships in the rest of the State? Do you think the role of Local Partnerships and Regional Alliances, and the relationship between them, is similar throughout the State to yours? In what ways do they differ?

Goals, Strategies, Barriers and Successes

14. Has your Local Partnership set goals for itself? What are they?

15. (IF GOALS ADOPTED) What strategies are being utilized to reach these goals? What barriers have you encountered and how have you tried to overcome them? What strategies have been successful?

16. Does your Local Partnership have a one year (or multi-year) plan? (IF YES, REQUEST COPY). (IF NO) Are you developing a plan? (IF YES) Where are you in that process?

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17. Do you take into account the goals set by the Regional Alliance? (IF YES) For each of the following goals, what are the strategies that are being utilized by your Local Partnership? What barriers have you encountered and how has the Local Partnership tried to overcome them? What strategies have been successful?

Goal	Strategies	Barriers and Methods to Overcome Them	Successes
a. Stakeholder Involvement			
b. Curriculum and Instruction (PROBE: selection and development of career majors, development of new curricula based on skill standards, integration of academic, occupational and work-based curriculum)			
c. Professional Development			
d. Work-based Learning			

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Goal	Strategies	Barriers and Methods to Overcome Them	Successes
e. Participation of All			
f. Student Performance			
g. Communication and Outreach (Marketing)			
h. Other			

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18. (IF NOT MENTIONED ABOVE) Is your Local Partnership addressing the development of career guidance and information services?

(IF YES) Can you describe your strategi 's and activities in this area? What barriers have you encountered and how have you tried to overcome them? What strategies have been successful?

19. Are you familiar with the STW Benchmarks and Performance Indicators currently being developed for the State? (IF YES) How does your Local Partnership expect to use them?

20. Has your Local Partnership developed, or is it developing, its own benchmarks or performance indicators to evaluate institutional, teacher, or employer participation in School-To-Work? (IF YES) What are they?

21. Are there other areas of success that you can point to so far? What are they?

22. Are there other barriers to implementation that you have not yet mentioned? What are they? How is your Local Partnership working to overcome them?

Budget and Resource Allocation

23. What is the current budget (state funds) for your Local Partnership and how are these funds allocated among your various goal areas?
Budget: % allocation by goal area:

24. To what extent are these funds matched by other sources? Can you please provide a breakdown of matching funds by source for each goal area?

25. Are there work areas that are underfunded? Which ones? What plans does your Local Partnership have to solicit additional funding?

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Relationship with the Ohio School-To-Work Office

26. **What is the nature of the relationship between the Local Partnerships and the Ohio School-To-Work Office? (PROBE: reporting, funding, technical assistance, coordination and information sharing, other)**

27. How could this relationship be improved?

28. Are there ways in which Local Partnerships could benefit from additional assistance, either from the State School-To-Work Office or from other state agencies? What are they?

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